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WILLIAM M. LAFFAN.

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The Franchise Tax and the City's Borrowing Capacity.

The Constitution of this State restricts the possible debt of any city, or its borrowing capacity, to "10 per centum of the assessed valuation of the real estate of such city subject to taxation," and the new system of assessing real estate up to its assumed full value was adopted by Mayor LOW's administration in order to encourage more lavish expenditure.

The Comptroller, in exulting over the upholding of the franchise tax by the Court of Appeals, says: "If the law had not been upheld, twenty-two millions of dollars would have been cut from the borrowing capacity of the city," which remark is based on the theory that the franchises assessed at two hundred and twenty millions are real estate, because the Ford act of 1899 provides that "the terms 'land,' 'real estate,' and 'real property,' as used in this chapter," include the value of all franchises.

Of course this conclusion is not sound. A statute passed by the Legislature cannot change the State Constitution or enlarge the meaning of words found in the organic instrument.

A special franchise or the right to use the public highways for transportation, for gas, telegraph, telephone, or other public service, is not real estate or personal estate, as that term is used in the State Constitution. It is intangible property, and, as the Court of Appeals has just held, it is "a new kind of property never taxed before," and, therefore, never contemplated by the framers of our State Constitution of 1896.

The Comptroller is, therefore, overhasty in his exultation, and while the decision has undoubtedly saved the city the amount of taxes involved, it cannot have increased the borrowing capacity of the city by one dollar.

The Prince of Wales and America.

The St. Louis Exposition is to be opened to-day ceremonially with an address by President ROOSEVELT, but the show proper is not to be until next year. Meanwhile, of special interest to us is the attention it is attracting on the other side of the ocean. For instance, King EDWARD and the British Government have selected the Prince of WALES as chairman of the Royal Commission to provide for the adequate representation of the United Kingdom at the great fair. It is reported, also, that the Prince is to visit this country next year to attend the exhibition personally. This may be only an assumption or an inference, but we hope it will be justified in the fact.

It is now forty-three years since the present King of England made his visit to this country when he was Prince of WALES. During the period since 1860 the transformation of this republic, socially, politically, financially and industrially, has been complete. JAMES BUCHANAN was then President, and the Democratic party was still dominant, though already Republicanism was demonstrating the power which gave it thereafter for so long a period the Federal control. In the Senate there were 38 Democrats to 26 Republicans, but in the House the Republicans were 113 to 101 Democrats. The Know-Nothing agitation, which several years before had been intense throughout the Union, was dying out, yet in this Thirty-sixth Congress there were 2 "Native Americans" in the Senate and as many as 23 in the House. It is noteworthy that these "Americans" were all from the Southern States. The two Senators were from Kentucky and Maryland, respectively. The 23 Representatives were: 7 from Tennessee, 5 from Kentucky, 4 from North Carolina, 3 from Maryland, 2 from Georgia and 1 each from Virginia and Louisiana.

The population of the Union was only 31,183,744. New York was then a town of only about 800,000 inhabitants. Relatively to the present, the conditions in this country generally were primitive. St. Louis, where the Louisiana Purchase Exposition is to be held, now a city with a population approaching 600,000, had then only about 160,000 inhabitants, or was a town of less than the present size of Kansas City or Rochester. Slavery was in existence, though the rumblings preceding the storm of the civil war had already begun to be heard loudly.

Announcement having been made that the Prince of WALES, now EDWARD VII., was about to visit Canada, President BUCHANAN wrote to Queen VICTORIA that he would be cordially received at Washington if he should extend his visit to the United States, and the Queen replied that the Prince would return home through this country. He landed at St. John's, Newfoundland, July 24, 1860, and, entering our territory Sept. 20, at Detroit, was welcomed with great enthusiasm. Chicago, now a town of hard on to two million inhabitants, had then a population of less than 110,000, but scores of thousands of people came out to greet the Prince when he arrived there. On the 3d of October he visited Washington and was received as a guest at the White House by President BUCHANAN. From there he made a brief visit to Richmond, and, on Oct. 9, went to Philadelphia, and two days later came to New York, where he was received in great state for a time which was primitive as measured by the present social and material development of the town.

The Broadway through which he passed was an humble street, comparatively, and a ball given to him at the Academy of Music on Oct. 12 was a modest and provincial affair by the side of the great and luxurious social functions of this time; but it was pronounced in the contemporary record "the greatest ball that had even been given in this country." Those were the days of the old Volunteer Fire Department, and a parade of 6,000 firemen was a conspicuous feature of the reception of the Prince.

If the son of that Prince of WALES shall visit this country and this city next year he will find a great nation and a splendid financial and commercial capital, and the enthusiasm with which he will be greeted will make the excitement aroused by the visit of the now EDWARD VII. seem to have been a village-like manifestation.

Moreover, if the Prince of WALES shall come next year he will find that this nation has risen to manhood and has acquired the poise which accompanies maturity, and the consciousness of maturity, and the recognition of its responsibilities. In 1860 the old impatience under foreign criticism, just or unjust, remained. Americans were concerned about what the rest of the world, and more especially the world of Europe, thought of them, and because of their sensitiveness on that score they were somewhat too self-assertive and aggressive. They wanted to show off their fine points. Now we are a great world power, sufficient unto ourselves, and no longer sensitive about what Europe thinks of us. We have grown up. A great change has taken place since 1860, too, in our attitude toward England. Harmony has succeeded jealousy and suspicion. The American nation is too great to harbor the old-time enmity. It has too much else to think about.

A royal personage is not so great a novelty to Americans now as he was forty-three years ago, and the demonstration of welcome which the present Prince of WALES would receive would therefore be more thoroughly a demonstration of friendliness toward the nation he represented than that aroused by the visit of his royal father in 1860.

Is the Fifteenth Amendment to Be Permanent?

The Thirteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution will stand, and ought to stand, forever unrepealed:

"Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist in the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction."

That declaration chiseled upon the tablet of fundamental law one of the two great results of the civil war, next to the preservation of the Union itself the greatest result of that mighty conflict. Slavery will never be reëstablished. Emancipation will never be undone.

The first section of the Fourteenth Amendment, likewise, is likely always to stand as it is. It declares:

"All persons born and naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

This defines citizenship and guarantees the inseparable rights of citizenship. It does not confer the suffrage upon all citizens. The denial of suffrage is not necessarily an abridgment of the rights of citizenship. Otherwise, the boy of fifteen and the woman of fifty, as persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, and therefore citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside, would be alike entitled without further legislation to the ballot. Such was not the intention of the Fourteenth Amendment. Such is not its force.

The rest of the Fourteenth Amendment, with the exception of the second section, refers to disability for office on account of rebellion and to the validity of the public debt. The second section, however, bears directly upon the first section, quoted above. It is:

"Representatives shall be apportioned among the several States according to their respective numbers, counting the whole number of persons in each State, excluding Indians not taxed. But when the right to vote at any election for the choice of electors for President and Vice-President of the United States, Representatives in Congress, the executive and judicial officers of a State, or the members of the Legislature thereof, is denied to any of the *male* inhabitants of such State, being twenty-one years of age and citizens of the United States, or in any way abridged, except for participation in rebellion, or other crime, the basis of representation therein shall be reduced in the proportion which the numbers of said male citizens shall bear to the whole number of male citizens twenty-one years of age in such State."

We have italicized one word in this section which shows that the intent of the Constitution has at no time been to base representation in Congress upon the number of citizens actually possessing the suffrage. For a hundred years the non-voting female citizens above twenty-one and the non-voting male and female citizens under twenty-one have been represented in the House proportionately with the male voters. Even in the days of slavery, by that clause of the Constitution which the Fourteenth Amendment superseded, the blacks in servitude, the negro slaves, male, female and children, counted in the apportionment each as three-fifths of a citizen.

It does not therefore follow that in the event of a reorganization of the system of suffrage, by the repeal or change of the Fifteenth Amendment, ultimate constitutional principles or public policy would necessitate a reduction of the basis of representation in States affected by the disfranchisement of the negro; although, of course, in that event the numerical basis of apportionment would become the subject of serious consideration, and the language of the second section of the Fourteenth Amendment would require some readjustment to accord with new conditions.

We come now to the brief Fifteenth Amendment, which incorporates what the nation is rapidly coming to believe was one of the most deplorable mistakes in our history:

"The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation."

The hasty policy which invested the emancipated males of African descent with the full right of suffrage was partly the result of supposed political expediency, partly of an ignorant overestimate of the possibilities of development inherent in the race. The costly experience of more than a third of a century, the span of a whole generation, has demonstrated the tremendous double mistake. The South has long known it; the North is fast learning it.

However far the direful consequences of this error of national judgment in 1869 and 1870 may be successfully avoided in the twentieth century by local expedients in evasion of the spirit, if not of the letter, of the Fifteenth Amendment, the probability remains that sooner or later the country will have to face squarely the question of its repeal.

Perhaps the sooner the better for the dignity of the instrument that now exhibits as a fundamental principle of the American system a theory of suffrage impossible of practical application with safety to the vital interests of the States chiefly concerned.

When even the Supreme Court of the United States, this very week, in the case of the clash of the Alabama Constitution with the Fifteenth Amendment, declines to interfere and dismisses the appeal for the enforcement of the negro's right to the unrestricted franchise, the time cannot be far off when American common sense will be ready to go fearlessly to the root of the matter.

For Grave Trouble No Quack Cure.

In the course of his painful unfinished wrestle between his own political convictions and the party prejudices that surround him, Mr. EDWARD M. SHEPARD has made a timely comment upon the most important matter of the day, the occasion being the Brooklyn Democratic Club dinner on Monday night, and the text the trusts:

"Mr. ROOSEVELT is already congratulated by his party associates on this—that the great corporations of the country will now be so afraid of his power that through this fear he may control their political action. He has himself talked of 'good trusts' and 'bad trusts'; that is to say, he assumes to decide what combinations are good and what are bad.

"He and his associates and their successors, however pure and exalted their motives, are given a control, with infinite possibilities of unwholesome centralization of power and of corruption."

It is of little moment that, after this statesmanlike description of evils that are real and grave, Mr. SHEPARD should turn to the poor little scheme of curing them through a tinkering of the tariff. They must be dealt with directly instead of through the round-about and speculative methods dear to the theorists in political economy.

The thing to do is to modify the all-centralizing and all-killing Sherman Anti-Trust law.

A Wonderful Boat.

The Burgess-Packard boat, described in THE SUN of Monday as designed to win the Challenge cup of San Francisco Bay, will be another cause of dismay to the barnacles who look upon modern advances in the form and character of yachts as opposed to sea morals. The overhangs in this case are to exceed considerably the actual water line. In the Reliance the overhangs measure 52 feet, as against 90 feet on the water line. The overhangs of the California boat will be about 40 feet, as against a water line of 28 feet; that is, this 28-footer will be nearly 70 feet over all. There is no occasion for alarm over these extraordinary proportions. The yachting designers have not lost their heads. They are simply taking advantage of the ever-increasing knowledge of what can be done with the ever-increasing strength of materials. New and stronger stuffs and new tricks in construction enable builders to-day to achieve what years ago would have seemed miracles.

This California boat and the Reliance, the modern skyscraper and the modern steamship are scientifically of one family. Each of them has been condemned by the experts belonging to its kind as a structural extravagance, monstrous and dangerous. Probably many an old salt is alive who looked to see the long pipe-stem craft Oceanic, the first of the White Star Line, break her back in her first serious storm. We believe the Oceanic is still afloat on the Pacific, and the new steamers of the last year or two are more than half as long again. The first high office building declared by architectural doubters to be built for a fall is scarcely more than waist high to many put up last year. So with the yachts.

We trust that the Burgess-Packard design will be seen on San Francisco Bay, for builders and sailors the world over to study.

The National Trophy Match.

The board to prepare rules for rifle matches for a national trophy hereafter to be offered by the Government has made its report, which is of interest to all interested in rifle shooting and its development in this country. The board consisted of twenty-one persons, five from the army and the Marine Corps, eight from the trustees of the National Rifle Association, and eight from the country at large—a very fair division of the membership, inasmuch as rifle-shooting hitherto has been fostered by private associations and persons rather than by the Government.

The report of the board having been approved by the Secretary of War, its recommendations become the established rules for the new National Trophy match. This will be shot this year at Sea Girt, N. J., on Sept. 8 and 9, and will be open to teams of twelve men, one team from each military department, one from the navy, one from the Marine Corps, and one from the National Guard of each State and Territory and the District of Columbia. The first stage will be at 200, 500 and 600 yards; the second at 800, 900 and 1,000 yards, ten shots by each competitor at each distance. The usual rules in the way of eligibility, uniform, entrance fees—these last not required from the Regular services—are laid down, the principal change to be noticed being the requirement that at the extreme ranges, 900 and 1,000 yards, the position is to be "prone, with head toward the target." This rule bars out the old "Texas" position, much favored by long-range marksmen in former days.

The winning team is to receive the National Trophy, valued at $1,000, and a money prize of $500; the second team will get the Hilton Trophy and $300; the third, the Soldier of Marathon Trophy and $200; the fourth, fifth and sixth teams will receive $150, $100, and $50 respectively, in cash; and each member of these six teams will receive a medal. Here it is to be noticed that the coöperation of the National Rifle Association enables the Hilton and Soldier of Marathon trophies to be put up as prizes in what is to be the great rifle match of the United States, as these, both won from New York, have been the prizes in separate important matches for some years back.

The Government will detail an officer to take charge of the National Trophy match, and will, so far as practicable, bear the expenses of the competition. In 1904 a range in the Middle West will be chosen instead of Sea Girt; and a skirmish run and other forms of shooting will be included in the competition. The plan adopted is excellent, and every National Guard that can do so should have its team at Sea Girt next September, that the first National Trophy match may be thoroughly successful and that American rifle shooting may receive the impetus that it needs.

The Bravest Are the Tenderest.

A new and most important field of physical exercise and social usefulness was entered by President ROOSEVELT in Iowa. The despatches are positive:

"At Des Moines the President kissed a number of babies. Four mothers, each with a baby in her arms, approached his carriage and handed bouquets up to him. Then they held the babies up to be kissed, and the President did not disappoint them."

Of course he didn't! If four hundred mothers had presented four hundred babies, and the time schedule had permitted, Mr. ROOSEVELT would have kissed the whole bunch.

Every baby along the route is equally and without discrimination entitled to osculatory recognition by the President of the United States.

It is the baby's just reward for its public spirit in having been born.

The citizens of Pensacola are to be commended for raising money to procure a challenge cup to be competed for by the crews of the vessels of the North Atlantic squadron annually, to be called the Pensacola Annual Challenge Cup. This is in line with Admiral TAYLOR's plan of developing athletics in the navy, and the struggle for the cup should be an interesting event in the annual winter cruise of the North Atlantic squadron. The gift is, we think, the first of its kind to our Navy, though similar cups are common in the British Navy, perhaps the most famous being that competed for yearly in Chinese waters by crews from the vessels of the British China squadron. Pensacola's good example should be followed by the citizens of other places; athletic clubs with balances in their treasuries might very properly offer such challenge cups as prizes for service rowing boats from the squadrons in various parts of the world.

The day that Baron HENRI DE ROTHSCHILD spends in jail for overspeeding his automobile will be a warning to locomotor scorchers all over the world.

The abandonment of the "liberal enforcement" policy was involved in the Mayor's recommendation to the Aldermen to suspend the ordinances relating to drygoods boxes, newestands and whatnot on the sidewalks, pending their revision into a shape that takes some consideration of the practical needs of the people of this city. As these ordinances were, they were not enforceable without grave inconvenience to a number of people incomparably greater than those who would be discommoded were there no ordinances at all.

Because Shamrock III. was launched at 1:20 in the afternoon of March 17 and Reliance at 5:28 in the afternoon of April 11, the moon rising for Reliance while it was doing something else for Shamrock, and the stars were in the positions shown by the maps for those respective dates, "ZAMAEL" tells us that the Cup will not be lifted. We pass the information on.

What an opportunity Mr. HENRY A ROGERS, President of the Board of Education, has before him! Acting in the name of the board, but without authority, he ordered a book on Indians by an old fighter thereof, Capt. J. LEE HUMFREVILLE. The board very properly repudiates the contract as unauthorized and refuses to accept the books, so that Mr. ROGERS can at one clip confess his fault as a public officer and establish himself as a man of his word by buying the books himself, which of course he is morally bound to do.

The Aldermen should not complain at any curtailment of their powers. They have brought it on themselves.

At St. Louis.

At early morn, ere yet the sun
Its daily orbit had begun,
While yet the firmament on high
Was lit by pale stars in the sky,
And all St. Louis, dimly gray,
Sat silent on the edge of day,
A weird, mysterious light appeared
Far to the East, and quickly neared
The sleeping city—such a light
As made a wonder of the night.
It filled the sky, the earth, the air,
With such a radiance, rich and rare,
That sleepers woke as if some strange
Bewitchment had impelled the change,
And coming forth their startled eyes,
Amazed, fell on the morning skies.
By this time scintillant with gleams
Plucked from a million painters' dreams
And mixed with rainbows, and the dyes
That poets sing in Orient skies,
And dazzling hues that come and go
In all the tropic flowers that blow,
And plumaged birds, and women's gowns,
And prismed sheen in jewelled crowns,
They stood entranced, for such a light
Of glory had not met their sight:
Such iridescent glints and gleams
In purple amethystine streams,
In glamourous, gay and glistening glow,
In fairy, fulgorescent flow,
In luminiferous, lucent lines,
In sparkling, splendent, shimmering shines—
And every person, in that light,
Before that dizzy, dazzling sight,
Felt in his soul, and said as much,
That nowhere else could there be such
A sunrise as had come their way
To greet the Exposition Day.

And yet, good friends, 'twas not the sun,
That thus the great day had begun—
No sun that ever shone could give
A radiance like that and live—
For presently, across the plain,
Our fifty-thousand-dollar train
Came whirling in its dazzling light
That knocked the sun clean out of sight.

W. J. L.

NOTES ON HAVANA.

Observations of Ordinary Travel and Daily Life in the Cuban Capital.

HAVANA, April 21.—All the door locks in the Havana hotels are put on upside down. In many cases they are on the outside of the doors. To unlock them one must hold the key upside down, and this requires practice. Doors are locked only to keep them from blowing about in the wind, and not at all for protection against thieves. One locks his door, fumbling with the key for a while, and then walks across the broad hall and hangs the key up under its number twenty feet away from the room and in full sight of it. Guests, hotel maids and boys, any one who has ambition enough to climb the long, but easy, flights of stairs are at liberty to take the key, unlock the doors and enter the room. After a day or so the visitor forgets that the arrangement is less secure than some other methods, and then he rests easy.

It isn't a serious inconvenience to any one if a guest runs off with a room key. The hall man gives the door a sharp tug. The bolt that holds it snaps up from its socket, and the door swings open. At night when there is a breeze the doors must be stuffed with papers to keep them from rattling.

Americans here declare that the week of April 14 to 21 was cooler than any of the weeks last winter. It has been the temperature of a clear, but warm June day. No one could have suffered from the heat, and, though there was rain one evening, the wet season has not begun.

Minister Squiers has a white automobile, built on the lines of a surrey, with a picnic basket hitched on behind.

Havana's police are a smart-looking, intelligent-appearing body of men. They are stationed on shorter posts than New York policemen. They are about the only men a visitor notices who don't smoke when they are on duty. The few other men who do not smoke all the time may safely be put down as sick, except the street railway employees. In Gen. Ludlow's time he forbade, or got the electric road officials to forbid, smoking on the cars. Why there was not a revolution no one knows. The Cubans are long-suffering, and smoking is not allowed on the cars to this day. The police begin to smoke as soon as they are off duty. So do the car employees. The police are polite. They are small men, like all Cubans. Each has a club like a New York policeman's nightstick and a heavy army revolver, which he wears outside his black-braided jacket of blue. The police keep their clubs in their belts except when they are in use, and do not swing them as they walk, *à la* New York. It is an honor to be a member of the police force. Some of the members are sons of once wealthy families, impoverished by one or another of the political and warlike troubles which have vexed the island. Now there is talk of a general strike throughout the island on May 1. In Havana, with the police allowed to do as they wish, it is prophesied that there will be no disorder of long duration.

Havana is as clean as intelligent sanitary supervision can make it. The prominent streets are clean, the courtyards are clean, and the walks are clean. A bad smell is practically unknown in the streets. The street cleaners, most of them in white, are at work day and night. They wake one up cleaning, and they lull him to sleep cleaning. Havana was not cleaner under the American military government than it is to-day. Brooke's work, Ludlow's work, continued by Wood and carried on by the new government, has transformed the city. The street cleaning costs more than any other department of the city government, but as Havana has not had a case of yellow jack originating in the city in eighteen months, this and the mosquito campaign are good investments.

The toilet arrangements in the hotels are unusual. The wash basins on the office and café floors are the most conspicuous things in the dining rooms. One eating his breakfast hears running water, looks about, and finds a man washing face and hands at his elbow. The only bath is in the toilet compartment marked "Ladies—Señoras." Mere man hesitates about invading the room, but the hallman bows him there, full of smiling confidence. The water supply is sufficient and pure. There are no rooms with baths in the hotels. In fact, no running water is in the rooms.

A Cuban room less than forty feet square is a mean affair. A Cuban who once lived in New York now occupies a house in which the dining room, one of the twenty mammoth rooms, is twice as large as his whole apartment on West Sixty-fourth street was. He confesses that sometimes he feels like screening off a corner ten feet square, and recalling in it the days when he was in the "States."

Jai Alai possesses Havana. It is a court game, splendid to watch, splendid to play, and magnificent to bet on. It is more talked about here than baseball in Pittsburg, and more bet on than horse races in New York. Your barber, your room servant, your cochero, the clerk who waits on you, the bootblack—each has his favorite player, and each is part proprietor at least twice a week in a ticket on the man or team he has picked to win. Once watching the game one understands why, for it is as graceful, and as full of demands on the players' skill and resourcefulness as any game that is played. It resembles handball and la crosse, and several other games. The betting may be bad, but the game is a splendid one.

When a Cuban audience wants to give a player or an orator an adverse opinion, it whistles. The demonstration that the gallery gods make in America to show their approval of the hero's triumph and the villain's downfall with fingers on tongue, means here that what has been said or done was bad—the very limit—*el colmo de la sinverguenzaria.*

The Havana trades unions are strongly annexationist, or at least a powerful faction is, so far as labor organizations go. They want to affiliate with the Gompers organization in Chicago. They are not territorial annexationists, or political annexationists, but they think the organizations here would be more powerful if they had an American continental connection. There are a lot of Anarchists, of all shades, kinds and conditions in the city, and they incite the workingmen whenever the opportunity offers. The labor organ is *Tierra*, and it has contained many fiery articles. The workingmen, particularly the tobacco workers, are remarkably well informed on public questions. Each room full of tobacco workers employs a reader, who sits perched above the heads of the workers, and reads aloud the newspapers. Not a paragraph or a sentence escapes him, and the workers take it all in.

The soldier who shows one through Principe Castle points out a tunnel, five feet high and two feet wide, and says that no one knows where the other end of it is. No one seems to care, either. The soldier only shrugs his shoulders and smiles when he is asked why some one does not explore. He smiles again as though the question a were useless one when he is asked why he does not employ some of his spare time in solving the mystery. As all the other passages in the fort were explored by the Americans when they held the city, it is probable that some American knows the secret of this one.

The hotel porters, the ones who are first seen by the visitors, are the smallest imaginable. A boy of fifteen, scarce four feet tall, hustles a baggage truck around at the Inglaterra. Another scarcely larger officiates at the Louvre. They appear to be perfectly capable of caring for themselves.

Cinematograph and phonograph shows appeal to the Cubans. Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves, Cinderella, pantomines and the like shown in moving pictures, fill two of the big theatres, into either of which two New York playhouses of ordinary size might be put, nightly. Between representations of fairy and folk tales an indecent picture, involving a man, a maid and a baby, is shown once in a while. No one pays any attention to it beyond the applause and hisses that greet every picture.

In the hotels when one buys a stamp the hotel clerk licks it and attaches it to the letter. This he does, though eight or ten letters, involving thirty or more stamps, are to be attended to, and in spite of the guest's expressed wish to do it himself.

An American in a Havana barber shop wanted a light shave. Not understanding or speaking Spanish, he drew his finger across his cheek. "Light—not close—not close—light—sabe?" he said. The barber murmured, smiling. The shave over, the American waved away the hair tonic offered by the barber. "No wet—no wet—dry—no wet—not wet—dry—no agua," he said. "Si," said the barber. As the American left the chair the barber said, respectfully: "I was educated by the Manhattanville Brothers, sir, in New York, where I lived in 1867 and for ten years after. My name is Antonio Balbas, and at school the other boys, particularly the American boys, called me Antonio Bologna Sausage. I hope the service I have performed for you was quite satisfactory, sir."

When the new Government Treasury was building President Palma wanted to bury $1,000,000 in gold beneath the vaults. He believed it would be good finance to lock that sum up in preparation for the political rainy day that may come at any time to this country. "In case of troubles," was his explanation, but he did not insist when he found that the other Cuban statesmen were opposed to his suggestion, and the gold was not buried.

Cuban boys may be seen at play daily at a game which is so much like the American "duck-on-a-rock" that it must be its first cousin. One stone is poised on a larger one, and the players attempt to knock it off with other stones from a distance. The boy who is "it" must replace the stone when it is knocked off and tag one of the other players before he can run a certain distance.

Motormen are the same the world over. Nothing delights a Cuban motorman so much as to clang his bell. He takes as much pleasure in hearing it sound as does a New York motorman. Instead of stamping on a short rod and striking a bell under the platform, as is done in New York, the Cuban motorman pulls a cord and rings a bell on the car roof. Sometimes, when a policeman is riding on the front platform, he yanks the cord vigorously, warning all to keep off the track. There are no open trolley cars in Havana yet, but they are coming and when they are in operation the Vedado line will be as attractive a ride as can be imagined. Along the seashore the cars make eighteen or twenty miles an hour, creating a breeze on the stillest days, and the view, with the old Spanish houses on one side and the sea on the other, is beautiful.

Havana's streets at certain hours are filled with schoolboys on their homeward way. Cut from the picture the squat, wide, highly colored buildings, and the scene might be in a New York street. The boys are bright, well-dressed, and each has his books strapped in a compact pack, dangling from his hand.

An American in search of rooms visited a Cerra house under which coursed a most picturesque brook, watering some graceful palms and brilliant foliage plants in the garden. He was delighted, and boasted to his friends of such a find. "Brook!" said a friend, "Man, that is an open sewer, and I happen to know one man who has had typhoid in that house, and another who has it now there."

Although the electric cars offer a quicker, smoother and much more pleasant way of moving about, the residents of Havana cling to the old-fashioned busses which were once the only public conveyances in the streets, and the bus patronage is apparently as good as ever it was. The busses take advantage of the car tracks for a road, however, and their passengers benefit from the electric line indirectly, if they do scorn the cars. The fare is the same in both.

There are three kinds of money in use in Havana, Spanish gold, Spanish silver, and American. All American currency, silver, paper, copper and gold, is rated as gold. Prices are given in Spanish silver first, then in Spanish gold and finally in American. Every merchant expects to be beaten down in the price of his wares, and he is amazed if a purchaser pays the first asking price without complaint.

Sometimes the spectators at the Fronton throw money on the court to annoy the players. This became such a nuisance that sometime ago the managers had a big sign painted ordering the spectators to refrain from throwing money on the court. The sign is regularly disregarded.

To call a coach in Havana one stands on the curb, hisses with all his might and waves his right hand with the same motion he employs to brush away an annoying fly. In New York the cab driver who witnessed the performance would take it for granted that he was being waved away and hissed.

The presiding officers of the Cuban deliberative bodies use a bell instead of a gavel to preserve order. President Portuondo of the lower house has two bells—one a silver tea bell, which he rings by waving it in the air; the other a bicycle bell mounted on two uprights, which he rings by whirling it around.

In the Episcopal chapel here the President of Cuba is prayed for at every service, his title being inserted in the prayer for those in authority immediately after the President of the United States.

The conductors on the street cars ring up fares by clasping a wrench on the fare register rod, instead of handles fastened to the rods. The register rods have no handles as in New York street cars.

The highest ambition of a Cuban, apparently, is to wear a uniform. Men in uniform are proud of it, and they always try to look neat and pretty. It is said that the Fire Department, or Bomberos, is the most sought after service in the island.

A luckless American who needed a trunk strap produced the impression on the Havana merchants of needing some shoe laces the other day, and in all the shops where he sought trunk straps enthusiastic clerks worked themselves hot trying to find a pair of shoe laces which would suit the señor. Finally the American went to a harness shop and there he found what he wanted. But the English-speaking clerk in this shop would not wait on him, because another clerk was learning English and wanted the practice.

When one buys a cigar in Havana a box of wax vestas is given to him. It is a snare and a fraud. The box is the size of the usual vesta box, but it has a false bottom two-thirds of the way from its real bottom, and it only holds a third of the number of matches one usually finds in such a box.

Result of the Bailey Bill.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* The cancellation of numerous orders for automobiles which, says the president of the National Association of Automobile Manufacturers, has followed the passage of the Bailey bill is the logical result of the New York Legislature's illogical action in permitting that bill to live. The depressing influence of the measure is being felt not only by the manufacturers directly, but also by the large stations where the machines are cared for, and, indeed, in every branch of the motor vehicle trade. If the threatened enactment of the measure serves to create so much disturbance in scarcely more than one week, it is easy to imagine what would happen if the bill should become a law.

Success to those who are working to accomplish its death! T.

Klondike in Alabama!

From the Atlanta Constitution.

News of the most remarkable gold discoveries in Alabama was brought to Atlanta yesterday by two of the most prominent citizens of Anniston. The new field is on the Coosa River, in Talladega county, and if there is in this district one-tenth the quantity of gold shown by the preliminary investigations, the mining world may be given a new sensation on the Klondike order.

THE MERGER DECISION.

Improvements Following Earlier "Mergers"—Fair Play Desired.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* My experience in building railroads and also my connection with their operation have caused me to take an earnest interest in the extensive discussions that have latterly occurred based on the Congressional act of 1890, the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States of 1896 and the recent decision of the Circuit Court of the United States, which prohibited the merging of the Northern Pacific and the Great Northern railways into and under the name of the "Northern Securities Company." Therefore, it seems to me that your article of the 24th inst. concerning this law and those decisions clearly and effectively shows what the result will be on investments in stocks and bonds of railroads if the United States Supreme Court should decide that a railroad company shall not make common cause, offensively and defensively, in protecting its property and its stock and bondholders from a destructive competition predicated solely on the shippers and travelling public crying out against railroads because a few have made fortunes in connection with them.

Suppose that the Northern Pacific and the Great Northern railways had been built by the Northern Securities Company by an issue of its own stock and bonds upon the two roads; would it be consistent and could the act of 1890 be so construed as to make the Northern Securities Company carry traffic over either of its roads at a rate that would decrease its reasonable earning power and receipts, and by so doing decrease the earning power and receipts of the other road? I know that the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad system is much better managed and operated now, both for the interest of the public and for its stock and bond holders, than the roads were which comprise that system when they were managed and operated separately; and what is true of the management and operation of the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad system is also equally true of the Pennsylvania Railroad system, the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad system and many other systems that are composed of old short roads that were originally built, managed and operated under great financial stress and difficulty. Surely, it must be conceded by the public that railroads, telegraph lines and telephone systems are among the greatest benefactors of the people in this country, and, therefore, there is no valid reason that can possibly be presented against or show in the slightest degree why the owners of railroads, telegraph and telephone stocks and bonds should not receive as much profit on their investment as an average of the most successful merchants and manufacturers receive on their investments. The hazard to the railroad investor is quite as great as it is in mercantile or manufacturing business.

Mr. Editor, railroads, telegraphs and telephones have been the means, to a large extent, of making this country wonderfully prosperous in population, wealth, comfort and happiness, hence let the Legislatures, Congress and the courts give them fair play.

NEW YORK, April 27. D. N. STANTON.

Churchmen Under Two Flags.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* In the eyes of sympathizers the chief trouble with "Father" Francis, the Rev. Spencer Jones, Lord Halifax, et al., may be that they are too honest. They have shown their hand. They are a bit previous. They have "given the snap away."

The Duke of Newcastle arrives on these shores and kow-tows impartially to the dignitaries of the Roman Catholic and the Anglo-Catholic Church. The Bishop of Fond-du-Lac and the Bishop of Delaware rush into other men's dioceses, celebrate "masses" on "Corpus Christi Day," anniversary of the "Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament," confer monastic orders on wandering priests and make monks of wild eccentrics, and then are "pained" and "shocked" that some of these go to Rome.

Catholics are respectable and Protestants are respectable; but honest men revolt at the flabby, jellyfish type of churchman who knows not "where he is at," and who is afraid to own allegiance either to the Pope or to the principles of the English Reformation. Such people suggest the dudes who play two women for all they are worth, or become engaged to two girls at the same time.

NEWARK, April 28. L. S. OSBORNE.

Discussing the Presidency.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* I have read your many editorials on political topics with pleasure and profit. There seems to me, however, to be a strain of uneasiness as to the future which is unwarranted by the facts. Americans are above all else a common-sense people. They have borne with patience and dignity the antics of the present occupant of the White House; but they have made up their minds to make a change at the proper time. The politician who "plays to the galleries" is not a safe man in high place, for you never know what craze may possess the multitude. Besides, experiments should never be made in political leadership. True and tried statesmen are the only ones who should be intrusted with power. There are many such in the Republican party. Should that party, however, fail to nominate one of them, then it is up to the Democrats to name a safe, conservative man, and the American people will do the rest. S. W. W.

The New York Tax Laws.

From the Rochester Post-Express.

In recent years there has been little effort to reduce the expenditures of the State, and those in control of its affairs have been solicitous, in the main, only for the discovery of new ways of getting money from the pockets of the people. A tax on inheritances, a tax upon bequests, a tax on mortgages, an increase in the charges for the sale of liquor, a tax on certificates of notaries, and a tax on the transfers of real estate are only a few of the schemes that have been proposed.

The crying need of the State of New York is not for the abolishment of the direct tax or for new revenues, but for a decrease in the expenditures. The grossest extravagance prevails in all departments of the State government.

If Governor Odell had devoted as much attention to reducing appropriations and shutting off extravagance as he did to the passage of the bill providing $50,000 to defray the expenses of his junketing trip to St. Louis, he would have stood far higher in the estimation of the people of this State than he does to-day.

Gen. Miles on Civilized Warfare.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* What is the matter with Gen. Miles? Can anybody give a little history regarding his tender ways when fighting Indians? Did he follow all the civilized methods of warfare, or did he "catch them" alive or dead—any way to get them? OLD SOLDIER.

NEW YORK, April 29.

Tom Barth Must Die Again.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* I have read with considerable interest the editorial note in this morning's issue of THE SUN which states that Tom Barth of Randolph county, Ala., is dead according to law, because he was pronounced dead after being hanged for murder, although he subsequently revived. You seem to have some doubt whether Tom can be again taken and hanged or not. The sentence in a capital case under the common law, and I think in all the States of this country which retain hanging as the method of inflicting capital punishment, was that the prisoner be taken to the place of execution by the Sheriff and there be "hanged by the neck until he be dead." Sir William Blackstone in the fourth volume of his "Commentaries," at page 406, says: "It is clear that if, upon judgment to be hanged by the neck till he is dead, the criminal be not thoroughly killed, but revives, the Sheriff must hang him again. For the former hanging was no execution of the sentence; and if a false tenderness were to be indulged in such cases, a multitude of collusions might ensue." Sir Matthew Hale says practically the same thing in volume 2 of his "Pleas of the Crown," on page 463. It would seem, therefore, that the best thing for Tom to do would be "to take to the woods," and not tarry on the chance of his being declared to be legally dead and immune from the carrying out of his sentence. LEX.

TRENTON, N. J., April 28.

Notice to "Fly Fisher."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Referring to "Fly Fisher's" letter in to-day's issue of your paper in relation to the pollution of trout streams in Sullivan county, I would call his attention to Section 100 of the Laws of New York, Chapter 974, June 2, 1896, as follows:

"No dye-stuff, coal tar, refuse from gas houses, sawdust, shavings, tanbark, lime, or other deleterious or poisonous substances shall be thrown or allowed to run into any of the streams."

If "Fly Fisher" will dictate a letter addressed to the President of the Commissioners of Fisheries, Game, and Forests, at Albany, N. Y., indicating the spot he refers to, I am satisfied that the Fish Commission will very promptly and cheerfully act in the matter. J. C. ANDERSON.

NEW YORK, April 28.

The *North American Review* for May maintains its reputation for timeliness, as a partial list of the articles it contains will show. Archibald R. Colquhoun, the well-known traveller, discusses "The Negro Problem"; Dr. Robertson Nicoll writes of Emerson, and W. J. Long discusses "The Modern School of Nature Study." Karl Blind tells why Germany strengthens her navy; W. D. Howells studies "Certain of the Chicago School of Fiction"; Stephen Bonsal writes of President Castro of Venezuela; Charles Johnston discusses "The Present Tendencies of Russian Policy," and Lord North offers some unpublished letters of his ancestor, the Lord North who was Prime Minister to George III. during the Revolution. Timeliness can go little further.